Shortfall in achievement of export target

121. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the target of export fixed for the current financial year;

(b) whether it is a fact that even 70 per cent of the target has not been achieved as the financial year is coming to an end; and

(c) the steps taken to achieve the target within the financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The export target for the year 2007-08 has been set at US$ 160 billion.

(b) As per the latest available trade data, exports reached a level of US $ 111 billion (provisional) during April-December, 2007-08 achieving nearly 70 per cent of the target set for the current year.

(c) Steps taken to achieve target include export promotion initiatives such as Implementation of the Focus Product Scheme, Focus market Scheme, Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana, Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme, Exprot Promotion Capital Goods Scheme, etc. Apart from this, special package have also been announced in respect of export items which were adversely affected by the appreciation of Rupee.

Free trade among IBSA

122. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) are working on free trade areas among them;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether IBSA has signed certain inter-governmental pacts in the areas of public administration governance, tax administration arts, cultural co-operation, higher education, wind resources, health, medicines and social development, etc.;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) how far will these have transforming effect on the lives of people of these countries, especially the poor masses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A working group of SACU (consisting of South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland), India and MERCOSUR (consisting of Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay & Uruguay) has held a meeting on 6 October, 2007 in South Africa and exchanged views for exploring the possibility of a trilateral trade arrangement between them.

(c) and (d) Seven MoUs/Agreements were signed during the 2nd IBSA Summit in South Africa on 17 October, 2007 in the fields of Public Administration and Governance, Higher Education, Health and Medicine, Culture, Social Issues, Wind Resources and Customs and Tax Administration Cooperation.

(e) The implementation of the MoUs/Agreements in intended to improve and promote people-to-people contacts in a number of areas, for example, development of cooperative exchange programmes, promoting cooperation in the areas of HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, procurement of medicine, vaccines etc. and exchange of cultural activities.

Policy intervention for acutely underdeveloped districts

123. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government will resort to specific policy intervention for districts with chronic unemployment and industrial underdevelopment;

(b) whether the data on these districts is being collected by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, based on 16 reports of the Planning Commission, some of which date back to 1960s;

(c) whether out of the total 700 districts about 170 are acutely underdeveloped, of which 70 per cent are in the eastern part of the country;

(d) whether the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and Bharat Nirman initiative focused in these districts; and

(e) what are the concrete programmes of action plan prepared in this reaged?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) and (b) Various studies in the past have sought to identify industrially backward regions in the country. More recently, with a view to focus on districts specific cases of industrial backwardness, inter-departmental meetings have been held and the relevant data available is being analysed to finalise and implement concrete policy decisions to address purposively the causes of industrial backwardness in various districts in a calibrated manner.

(c) In 2005 Planning Commission has identified 170 most backward districts in the country for the purpose of redressing growing regional imbalances. More than half of these districts are located in the eastern region of the country.

(d) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (NREGA) was launched for securing the livelihood of the people in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of employment in a financial year to a rural household. It has been decided to cover all rural areas of the country under NREGA with effect from 01.04.2008. The initiative also focused under Bharat Nirman in